

Message Text

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17

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMCONSUL ZAGREB

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YO,AL

SUBJECT: ALBANIAN - YUGOSLAV RELATIONS -- PROBLEMS

REF : A. STATE 039543 B. BELGRADE 1066

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS
REF A ON OUR REPORTING ON DETERIORATING IN ALBANIAN-
YUGOSLAV RELATIONS AND SITUATION OF ALBANIAN MINORITY IN
YUGOSLAVIA. WE PLACING INCREASING EMPHASIS ON THIS SUBJECT,
INCLUDING REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS FOR POLITICAL OFFICER
WITH OFFICIALS IN PRISTINA MID-MARCH. AND IN RECENT
DAYS WE HAVE DISCUSSED CURRENT SITUATION WITH WELL-
INFORMED YUGOSLAV JOURNALIST AND FSFA OFFICIAL, AND WITH
SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER. END SUMMARY.

2. YUGOSLAV PRESIDENCY MADE "HARD DECISIONS" REGARDING
RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA LAST WEEK, ACCORDING TO YUGOSLAV
JOURNALIST SPECIALIZING IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PRESS

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REPORTS THAT PRESIDENCY MET ON FEBRUARY 19 AND DISCUSSED

SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. USUALLY CANDID OFFICIAL OF FEDERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FSFA) WITH DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALBANIA BLANCHED WHEN ASKED ABOUT NEW DECISIONS. HE DENIED THAT ANY MAJOR CHANGE IN OVERALL GOY POLICY OF GOOD RELATIONS IS IN THE OFFING, BUT SAID THAT COOPERATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS LIKE TRADE AND CULTURE MUST BE A TWO-WAY STREET AND LEFT IMPRESSION WITH POL. COUNS THAT GOY MAY BE PLANNING SOMETHING.

3. WHILE JOURNALIST WOULD NOT SAY WHAT DECISIONS WERE, HE CRYPTICALLY EXPRESSED FEAR THAT GOY UNDERESTIMATES DANGER OF TAKEOVER BY PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS IN ALBANIA. HE THINKS PRESENT ANTI-YUGOSLAV CAMPAIGN IN ALBANIA IS RESULT OF SHIFT IN INTERNAL POWER BALANCE, THERE SINCE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT OF DECEMBER 15 WAS HANDLED QUIETLY FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL WEEKS.

4. FSFA OFFICIAL CONFIRMS GOY DOES NOT CONSIDER DANGER OF PRO-SOVIET TAKEOVER GREAT. WHILE HE AGREES INTERNAL FACTORS EXPLAIN CURRENT ALBANIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA, HE SEES HOXHA IN CONSOLIDATION STAGE OF TWO-YEAR LONG STRUGGLE NOT AGAINST PRO-SOVIET BUT TECHNOCRATIC, MODERNIZING, OUTWARD LOOKING FORCES--SOME OF WHOM FIND YUGOSLAV BRAND OF SOCIALISM ATTRACTIVE AND ALL OF WHOM WANT A LESS ISOLATED COUNTRY. GOY FEELS RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA WILL ALWAYS BE LIMITED AND PERIODICALLY DIFFICULT AS LONG AS HOXHA IN POWER. YUGOSLAVS TRACE ALBANIA'S BREAK WITH SOVIET UNION TO STALINIST - ERA HOXHA'S INABILITY TO REPUDIATE A PAST IN WHICH HE THOROUGHLY IMPLICATED, AND FOLLOW KRUSHCHEV'S LEAD IN MAKING UP WITH YUGOSLAVIA. IN ADDITION TO POLITICAL STRUGGLE HOXHA FACES DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION AT PRESENT. THUS GOY SEES HIM TRYING TO PLAY ON NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS OVER BOAT INCIDENT TO GENERATE POPULAR SUPPORT.

5. SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER, WITH OBVIOUS INTEREST IN DOING SO, TOLD CHARGE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT WAS A DELIBERATE PROVOCATION ON THE PART OF THE ALBANIANS AND THAT THE ALBANIAN BOAT CAPTAIN HAD TRIED TO RAM YUGOSLAV

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BOAT (FSFA OFFICIAL SAYS ALBANIAN RAMMING ATTEMPT INDEED MADE BUT ONLY AFTER GOY PATROL BOAT HAD ATTEMPTED TO HALT ALBANIAN CRAFT). YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN RELATIONS WERE AT THE LOWEST POINT IN MANY YEARS AND THIS COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTABLE SOLELY TO GUIDANCE THE ALBANIANS MIGHT BE SETTING FROM THE PRC. HE IMPLIED THAT THE FRICTION BETWEEN THAT ALBANIAN POPULATIONS OF KOSOVO AND THE SERBS WAS RUNNING EXTREMELY HIGH AND THAT THE ALBANIANS WERE BEGINNING TO

FEAR SOME KIND OF YUGOSLAV MORE AGAINST THEM. HE HIMSELF DISCOUNTED THIS EVENTUALITY FOR THE MOMENT BUT SAID HE COULD NOT SAY HOW THE SITUATION COULD BE CONTAINED IN THE FUTURE. HE NOTED IN PASSING THE HOXHA COULD NOT BE ALL THAT ANTI-SOVIET BECAUSE "THERE IS STILL A STATUE OF STALIN IN TIRANA AND, AFTER ALL, THEY DO NOT HAVE ONE IN YUGOSLAVIA."

6. WHILE WE UNABLE AT THIS POINT TO CONFIRM SOVIET STATEMENT THAT FRICTION BETWEEN SERBS AND LOCAL ALBANIAN POPULATIONS RUNNING "EXTREMELY" HIGH IN KOSOVO ITSELF, OPEN EXPRESSIONS OF DISLIKE FOR KOSOVO-ALBANIANS AND BURDEN THEY REPRESENT IS NOT UNCOMMON TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IN BELGRADE THESE DAYS. ADVISER TO FLIGOROV TOLD CHARGE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH DEVELOPED REPUBLICS WOULD GIVE KOSOVO WAS MOST DIFFICULT ISSUE IN FIVE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN. SLOVENIAN TRANSLATOR IN SKUPSHTINA TOLD POL COUNS SLOVENIAN DELEGATION WAS EXTREMELY AGITATED ON THIS ISSUE AND HARSH WORDS EXCHANGED, AND WE HER FROM SOME HIGHLY-PLACED YUGOSLAVS ASSERTIONS THAT MONEY HAS BEEN POURED INTO KOSOVO FOR YEARS WITH NO RESULT, THAT ALBANIANS ARE TOO LAZY TO WORK, ETC. ON OTHER SIDE OF LEDGER, UNEMPLOYMENT IN KOSOVO IS HIGHEST IN COUNTRY, DISPARITIES IN STANDARD OF LIVING ARE GLARING DEVELOPMENT GAT NOT CLOSING AND ALBANIAN PARTY LEADER BAKALI FEELS COMPELLED TO MAKE INPSSIONED SPEECHES ABOUT HIS REPUBLIC'S NEED FOR HELP.

7. OF COURSE ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON BOTH SERB-ALBANIAN RELATIONS IN KOSOVO AND LARGER YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN RELATIONSHIP ARE JAILING OF 19 IRREDENTISTS "STALINISTS" (WE UNDERSTAND ANOTHER GROUP NOW ON TRIAL FOR OPENLY ADVOCATING INDEPENDENCE AND SLANDERING TITO) AND YUGOSLAVIA'S CONFIDENTIAL

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RECENT ANTI-STALINIST, ANTI-COMINFORMIST CAMPAIGN IN GENERAL. AS JANUARY 22ND ARTICLE "STALIN WAS AND REMAINS A GREAT MARXIST-LENIST" IN TIRANA'S "ZERI I POPULIT" MAKES CLEAR, HOXHA SEES ANY ATTACK ON STALIN AS AN ATTACK ON HIM. ARTICLE REVERSES ALL YUGOSLAVIA'S ARGUMENTS, CHARGING THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES HAVE LED THEM TO "CHAUVINISM...INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHERS...TO ACCUSE A CERTAIN NATIONALITY OF IRREDENTISM... TO CONCEAL THE INJUSTICES AND TO SURPRESS THE PURE AND LEGITIMATE NATIONAL FEELING OF THE PEOPLE".

8. COMMENT: THE WHOLE SITUATION WITHIN YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO AND BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA IS OVERWHELMINGLY REDOLENT OF THE NORTH-SOUTH, DC-LDC, COLONIAL ANTI-

IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE WHICH THE YUGOSLAVS SO SIRHTEOUSLY
CASTIGATE US WITH AT THE UN AND ELSEWHERE. IT COULDN'S
HAVE HAPPENED TO A NICER GOVERNMENT.
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